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SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENT TO MID-EAST EXPERTS' MEETING

REF: USNATO 7553, STATE 245278

III. SITUATION IN OTHER MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES

F. IRAN

45A. IRAN IN 1978 HAS EXPERIENCED ITS MOST INTENSE DOMESTIC TURMOIL SINCE THE 1963 ANTI-SHAH RIOTS. THE OPPOSITION HAS RALLIED BEHIND THE SHI'ITE CLERGY PROTESTING THE SHAH'S MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS. THE UNREST REACHED ITS PEAK IN EARLY SEPTEMBER WITH 97 DEATHS IN TEHRAN ALONE, ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL FIGURES. THE GOVERN-
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MENT ON SEPTEMBER 8 IMPOSED MARTIAL LAW FOR SIX MONTHS IN TEHRAN AND ELEVEN OTHER CITIES, DRAMATICALLY LESSENING (PERHAPS TEMPORARILY) THE VIOLENCE.

45B. THE SHAH IN EARLY 1978 QUICKENED THE PACE OF HIS LIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN, PROMISED OPEN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN JUNE 1979, INSTITUTED JUDICIAL REFORMS,

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AND ENHANCED CIVIL LIBERTIES. DESPITE THE VIOLENCE AND MARTIAL LAW, THE SHAH HAS PLEDGED TO CONTINUE HIS LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM, THOUGH THE PACE WILL PROBABLY BE DETERMINED BY THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION. IN AN EFFORT TO PLACATE HIS RELIGIOUS OPPONENTS, THE SHAH REPLACED PRIME MINISTER AMOUZEGAR WITH JAAFER SHARIF-EMANI, WHO MOVED QUICKLY TO CLOSE GAMBLING CASINOS, RESTORE THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR AND REMOVE CORRUPT OFFICIALS. THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM PLEDGES TO REDUCE TAXES OF LOWER INCOME GROUPS, TO INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF DEVELOPMENT FUNDS TO AGRICULTURE, TO PROMOTE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND ASSEMBLY, AND TO ORGANIZE FREE ELECTIONS. THE CRITICAL QUESTION IS HOW FAST THE GOVERNMENT CAN MOVE TO CONVINCE CRITICS THAT IT IS SERIOUS ABOUT POLITICAL FREEDOM, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RESPECT FOR FUNDAMENTAL ISLAMIC VALUES, WITHOUT APPEARING TO BE TOO WEAK.

45C. THE SHAH INTERPRETED THE APRIL COUP IN AFGHANISTAN AS ANOTHER SOVIET MOVE TO ISOLATE IRAN. NEVERTHELESS, TEHRAN MAINTAINS CORRECT RELATIONS WITH THE LEFTIST AFGHAN GOVERNMENT AND CONTINUES ITS AID PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE AFGHAN NATIONALISM. TO PROTECT ITS EXPOSED EASTERN FLANK, WHERE IT FEARS THAT KABUL THREATENS PAKISTAN'S INTEGRITY, TEHRAN CONTINUES TO WORK CLOSELY WITH ISLAMABAD. CLOSE TIES WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT REMAIN VITAL IN FORESTALLING EXPANDED SOVIET INFLUENCE
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AMONG THE ARAB STATES TO THE WEST AND IN THE PERSIAN GULF. BECAUSE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT IS CONSIDERED A THREAT TO IRAN'S POSITION, THE SHAH HAS SUPPORTED SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVES, PRODDED THE ISRAELIS TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE AND WILL PROBABLY BACK ANY FORM OF SETTLEMENT SADAT CAN NEGOTIATE WITH THE ISRAELIS.

45D. THE SHAH'S QUEST FOR MASSIVE ARMS PURCHASES REFLECTS, IN PART, THE CONCERN THAT IRAN ITSELF MUST HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO THWART A DIRECT SOVIET OR SOVIET SUPPORTED MOVE LONG ENOUGH FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ARRIVE. WARMING IRANIAN RELATIONS WITH THE PRC, UNDERSCORED BY THE RECENT VISIT OF CHAIRMAN HUA, ARE DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE TO MOSCOW THE INCREASED NUMBER OF OPTIONS OPEN TO IRAN. AT THE SAME TIME, TEHRAN'S RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW REMAIN GOOD; BY EXPANDING TIES WITH THE USSR,

THE SHAH APPARENTLY HOPES TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR SOVIET COOPERATION. CHRISTOPHER

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